

Interrogative sentence of Bodo: A study

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Abstract

Every race, community, tribe or nation have their own language to express, share and communicate their feelings of joy, sorrow, anger, ideas and thoughts. The Bodo community of the Mongoloid race has its own language known as Bodo Language. The Bodo language is derived from the Sino-Tibetan language family. This language is formed by some characteristics that is tone and agglutinating in nature. The structure of sentence of Bodo language is SOV (Subj. + Obj. + Verb.). The SOV structure of Bodo language is a unique characteristic which are found in interrogative sentence like tag question, question word, intonation, yes no types question in Bodo language as well. It is known that the Interrogative sentence is a part of a Sentence. Every people have to pass their days by using these question and answer type conversations in their daily life.

Therefore, the research paper is attempted to study about the interrogative sentence of the Bodo language and also pointing the question particle and question word.

Keyword: interrogative sentence, Tag question, Intonation, Yes- No Question, Question word.

1.0 Introduction:

Bodo language is one of the oldest languages in North-East India. The people are scattered in a large area in the length and breadth of Assam and its neighbouring states like Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, North Bengal area of West Bengal and also in neighbouring countries Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. They are known as different name in different time and different areas. The Bodos of North Bengal are known as mech, in Nepal as meche, in North Kachar as Kachari & Dimasha and Boro or Bodo in Brahmaputra Valley. However today they introduce themselves as Bodos. Bodo people are inhabited in the Brahmaputra valley in Assam. J.D. Anderson writes in the introduction of Rev. S. Endle's book 'The Kacharis' as "*The rivers names of the whole Brahmaputra valley are Bodo names and its demonstrable that the Bodos were the aborigines of the valley. In the great mass of hills an outlying spur of the mountain of upper Burma, which divide the Brahmaputra valley from that of the river surma which runs parallel to it from east to west are two more Bodo groups.*"¹ Racially the Bodo belongs to mongoloid stock and linguistically belongs to the Bodo sub section of Bodo-Naga under the Assam-Burmese group of the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino-Tibetan family. It is a developing language in the field of education and literature. The language was recognized as the medium of instruction in the school level from 1963 and modern Indian language from 1977 under Gauhati University in Assam. The language is also recognized as the 'Associate State Language of Assam' in 1985. Bodo language is also included in the Eight Schedule of the Indian constitution in the year 2003. According to the 2001 and 2011 census report of India, the number of Bodo language speaker is 12,96,162 and 13,63,735 respectively.

Bodo language has special characteristics in structure of Interrogative sentence. The interrogative sentence is formed as the question word, intonation, tag question yes-no type question. The paper is trying to study the question particle construction, types and uses of interrogative sentences in Bodo language.

1.1 Review of Literature:

Many linguists, scholars have been discussed about the language structure and its characteristics along with question particles of Bodos on the topic in books, magazines, journals but no one discussed on the topic properly and systematically in-depth. A Bodo grammar book '*Gwnang Raokhanthi*' by Kamal Kumar Brahma discusses the structure of Phonology, Morphology and Syntax. He also discusses the question particles and mentions interrogative particles like /dabi, da, na, nama, ba/ and some interrogative pronoun. But in this book, there is no any discussion regarding how the question sentences are made and its uses in sentence is not found properly.

The book '*Boro Raokhanthi*' by Swarna Prabha Chainary discusses the aspect of linguistics that is phonology, morphology and syntax. She discusses only question or interrogative pronoun but did not discuss on the topic. '*Gwjwu Raokhanthi*' a Text book of Boro Grammar Approved by AHSEC for H.S. 1st & 2nd Year classes (New

¹ Endle, Rev. S. '*The Kacharis*'. 3rd Edition, College Hostel Road, Guwahati, Assam: Bina Library, 2017,

Course) written by Madhu Ram Baro. He discusses the branches of Boro Language, Traditional Grammar, Phonology, Morphology and Syntax. He also discusses how question structures are made in Bodo language but there is not systematic and scientific discussion which are found in modern grammar.

1.2 Aims and Objectives:

The main aims and objectives of the topic are-

- i) To study the structure of interrogative sentence in Bodo Language.
- iii) To highlight the question word and Question particles in Bodo language.

1.3 Significance of the Study:

Question sentence as well as interrogative structure is an integral part of the Bodo language. Question and answer both are used in daily life. There are many types through which questions sentences are made. These are question particles, intonation, tag question, question word. These question particles and question words are also used in different places in sentences except intonation and tag question. There is no any scientific study on the topic in- dept and thoroughly in the Bodo language despite many scope and significance. That is why the topic "Interrogative sentence in Bodo" is selected as a problem of the study to reveal the situation of language speaking and its uses.

1.4 Area of the Study:

The area of the study is the interrogative sentence in the Bodo language. The study is focused mainly on the structure of Bodo interrogative sentence which is formed by Question word, intonation, tag question and question particles. The study also comprises the technique how the question particle and question word are used and distribution of interrogative sentence is made in Bodo language.

1.5 Source of Data Collection and Methodology:

The data have been collected basically from primary and secondary sources. The primary data is collected by interview and observation method and the secondary data is collected from the various reference books like magazines, journals, dissertation published by authors and organizations.

The analytical method is taken to study the proposed topic. The method is used for the study because the question particles are made by question sentences which clarify the meaning clearly.

2.0 Discussion:

Interrogative sentence is the kind of sentence that is mostly used by the people in their daily lives. A person expresses his/her thoughts through the language in all the communication. To make communication in this way the speakers used interrogative sentence. Sentence is formed by placing the words systematically. There are various types of Sentences but the Interrogative sentence is used widely to inquire something which the speaker is willing to know about. According Ekke Hardkonig and Stemund, *'Interrogative word which replace the core constituents or arguments of a sentence and typically inquire about person or things as well as interrogative words in an adverbial function which are typically used to seek information about 1) the location of a situation, 2) It's temporal setting, 3) the manner of carrying it through and 4) the reason for it.'*²

The structure of Bodo language has a unique quality. The unique quality of the language can be found in forming an Interrogative sentence of the language as well. By observing the interrogative sentences in Bodo language, the following types can be found. These are-

- 1) Yes-No type question
- 2) Intonation
- 3) Tag question
- 4) Using question word

2.0.1 Yes-No type question:

The construction of Yes-No type question is found in Bodo language. The reply of such type question is simply Yes or No. Such type of question is regarded as Yes-No type question. This type of question is asked between two options and the reply to the question may be negative or positive. It depends on the responder. In English language, to form an interrogative sentence, Do, Did, Does and Helping Verbs are pre-positioned in the beginning of the sentence. But it is not the same case in Bodo language. Only by using some question particles, the interrogative sentence can be formed in Bodo language. There are eight (8) question particles in Bodo language. These are- /na, ne, se, nama, mathuy, dabi, da/. Some of these question particles are used at front, middle and end of the sentence to form Yes-No type question in Bodo language.

For Example-

² Konig Akkehard and siemund Peter. *Language typology and syntactic description*, 2nd Edition, 2007, Cambridge University press, pp.302.

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1) nup̄y ʏŋkhamkhuu zagun nama? | (Will you have rice?) |
| 2) biyʏ n̄ao phʏigun dabi? | (Will he come home?) |
| 3) anarua ph̄oraisaliao thangun na? | (Will Anaru go to school?) |
| 4) laimʏna ʏŋkhamkhuu zagun na zaya nʏ? | (Will Laimwn eat rice or not?) |
| 5) nup̄y hathaiao thangun na thanga? | (Will you go to market or not?) |

The examples given above show that all the question particles are used in the simple sentence and interrogative sentence.

2.0.2 Intonation:

Intonation is also a part of making an Interrogative sentence. An Interrogative sentence in the Bodo Language can be formed through Intonation. Intonation is a part of Suprasegmental phoneme. It is closely associated with the pitch. The rise and fall of the voice in speaking is known as Intonation. It depends on the main purpose and idea of the speaker. While speaking, a speaker changes the pitch level of a sentence which expresses various meanings of that sentence depending upon the tone pitch of the speaker. By looking at time and pitch level, Intonation is divided into three categories-

I) Falling Rising: Falling Rising Intonation is a change in the voice where it falls initially and then rises afterwards.

II) Level: When the pitch of the voice remains relatively constant, it refers to a Level Intonation.

III) Rising Falling: When the pitch of the voice rises initially due to stress and sounds high and then falls and sounds low towards the end within the same sentence or phrase, it refers to Rising Falling Intonation.

Apart from that the Intonation can be found in three types in Bodo language- Falling Rising intonation always occurs when forming an Interrogative sentence.

For Example-

i) nup̄y phʏigun da?

You will come, right?

This sentence conveys the meaning that a speaker is trying to know whether the subject (you) will come or not. /Nwng/ is more stressed and tone is raised. Therefore, there is falling rising intonation in this sentence.

ii) nup̄y zagun?

Will you eat?

Here, the enquirer wants to know whether the subject nup̄y (you) will eat or not. /nup̄y/ is more stressed and tone is raised. Therefore, there is falling rising intonation in this sentence.

iii) biyʏ lagun?

Will he take?

Here, the enquirer wants to know for sure whether the subject /biyʏ/ will take the thing or not. /nup̄y/ is more stressed and tone is raised in /lagun/. Therefore, there is falling rising intonation in this sentence.

2.0.3 Tag Question:

A question sentence can also be formed using tag question in the Bodo language. To clear the confusion, confirmation or clarification of information or seeking agreement from the listener, a tag question is used. Question particles needs to be used to form a tag question in the Bodo language. In addition, Intonation also works together here. Two statements are required in tag question. The statement is declarative sentence. If the declarative sentence is positive then the question tag will be negative. If the declarative sentence is in negative form then the question tag will be positive. But the reply or the answer to the question might be positive or negative. It depends on the responder. Question particles play a key role when the statement sentence is asked by the negative or positive question tag.

For example-

I) Positive+Negative question tag: -

i) biyʏ mase mʏsa, n̄ŋga nama?

(It is a Tiger, Isn't it?)

ii) mʏsuqua gaŋsuʏ zayw, zaya se?

(Cow eats grass, doesn't it?)

iii) hainaria mʏsagun, mʏsaya nama?

(Hainari will dance, won't she?)

iv) biyʏ saha luŋga, na luŋga?

(He will have tea, won't he?)

II) Negative+Positive question tag: -

i) sansria mʏsaya, biyʏ mʏsagun na?

(Sansri won't dance, will she?)

ii) biyʏ n̄ao thanga, na thangw̄n nama?

(She will not go home, will she?)

iii) biyʏ laizamkhuu h̄orakhuimwn, na h̄orbai se?

(She did not send the letter, did she?)

iv) biyʏ saha luŋga, na luŋguʏ nama?

(She does not drink tea, does she?)

2.0.4 Using question word:

In the Bodo language, some question words are used to form a question sentence. When such words are used, the responder quickly understands that the enquirer is asking a question. These question words are also called open questions. Because these words do not take help from other words to convey a question; they are independent. The question words in Bodo language usually starts with consonant phonemes such as /b/, (𑜋), /s/ (𑜉), /m/ (𑜓). These are- ma (𑜓𑜂𑜆𑜇) mabla (𑜓𑜂𑜆𑜇𑜂𑜆𑜇)

maburupi (माबुरै)
 besebang (बेसेबां)
 sur (सोर)
 manu (मानो)
 bobe/mabe
 (बबे/माबे)

2.0.4.1 /ma/(What):

/Ma/ is used in the Bodo Interrogative sentence. It is an open question word, hearing which the responder quickly understand that he is being asked a question. /Ma/ question word is an Interrogative pronoun. /Ma/ question word is used in asking questions about things, actions, specific details or information. It can also function as a Subject of the sentence. Thus, /ma/ question word either use at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence.

For example-

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| i) ma khamdu? | (What are you doing?) |
| ii) ma zadungmu? | (What happened?) |
| iii) nu? ma gamini? | (Which village are you from?) |
| iv) nu? ma zaigayao kharlamu? | (Which place did you run off to?) |
| v) biyu ma bizabkhu bainanupi labukhu? | (Which book has he bought?) |
| vi) biyu ma gariniphrai ungkarkhu? | (Which car did he get off from?) |
| vii) ma ungkari zakhu? | (What curry have you eaten?) |

2.0.4.2 /sur/(Who):

Another question word in the Bodo language is /sur/. It is also an Interrogative pronoun word. To identify a person or people, to know about the specific person or people; /sur/ question word is used. /sur/ can be used only in the case of people but cannot be used when asking about animals or insects or others. When /sur/ is used by the enquirer, the responder has to identify himself or someone; it depends on the situation and the question being asked. It only uses at the beginning or at the end of a sentence.

For example –

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| i) sur phuidu? | (Who came?) |
| ii) sur khardu? | (Who is running?) |
| iii) sur musadu? | (Who is dancing?) |
| iv) sur methai khundu? | (Who is singing?) |
| v) laimu? sur? | (Who is Laimu?) |
| vi) gotha sur? | (Who is the child?) |
| vii) bini biphaya sur? | (Who is his father?) |

2.0.4.3 /mabla/(When):

/mabla/ is also a Bodo question word. It is used to enquire about time. The context of time may be time of action, or anything that is related with time or moments. /mabla/ is used at the beginning and the middle position of sentence.

For example-

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| i) mabla zakhu habaya? | (When is the marriage?) |
| ii) nu? mabla nao thanu? | (When will you go home?) |
| iii) nu? mabla phugiu? | (When will you come?) |
| iv) nu? mabla ungkhamkhu zagu? | (When are you going to eat rice?) |
| v) mabla bidi zathai zakhumakhu? | (When did such incident happen?) |

The examples given above shows that /mabla/ is used to enquire about time in any context.

2.0.4.4 /maburupi/(How):

/maburupi/ question word is also used in Bodo question sentence. It is used to enquire about the manner, condition, degree of something. It can be applied in different ways depending on the type of information being requested. /maburupi/ question word is an adverb question word. This question word also uses at the front or in the middle of as sentence.

For example-

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| i) nu? maburupi du? | (How are you?) |
| ii) biyu maburupi hakhoro gulukikhu? | (How did he fall into the grave?) |
| iii) aini dehay maburupi du? | (How is mother's health?) |
| iv) aphaya maburupi zabrothai zakhu? | (How did father meet an accident?) |
| v) nu?ni akhaia maburupi baikhu? | (How did your arm break?) |

The above examples show that all the questions are asked about an incident or condition or the manner of the incident occurred.

2.0.4.5 /besebang/(How much/ Many):

In the Bodo language, /Besebang/ question word is an adjective question word. It functions as adjective and forms a question sentence. To know about the quantity or the price or value of a things, animals; /besebang/ question word is used. For example-

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| i) muigoni dama besebang? | (How much does the vegetable cost?) |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|

- ii) nuṅṅ lanai dōkhonani dama besebaṅ? (What is the price of the Dokhona that you took?)
- iii) daodwini besena besebaṅ? (What is the price of the egg?)
- iv) gamsakhuṅ besebaṅ lakhuṅ? (How much did the gamosa cost?)
- v) gaikerkhūṅ besebaṅ lakhuṅ? (How much did the milk cost?)

In this way, the question word /besebaṅ/ is used to know the price or quantity of things in an interrogative sentence.

/besebaṅ/ question word can use at the front, middle and final position of a sentence.

2.0.4.6 /manuṅ/(Why):

To know about a specific reason or cause, this question word is used in the Bodo language. /manuṅ/ question word is also an adverb question word. When an enquirer asks using /manuṅ/ question word than the responder reply him give a reason for the question being asked.

For example-

- i) nuṅṅ manuṅ phōraisaliao phūiakhuṅ? (Why didn't you come to school?)
- ii) biyūṅ manuṅ muli luṅṅamūṅ? (Why did he take the medicine?)
- iii) biyūṅ manuṅ nōniphrai kharlangkhūṅ? (Why did he run away from home?)

2.0.4.7 /bōbe/mabe/(Which/Where):

/bōbe/mabe/ Bodo question word is a pronoun question word. This question word is used to inquire about the name of the place, animals, and things in the Bodo language.

For example-

- i) bōbe zaigani mūṣṣuṅṅ belai? (Where does this cow belong to?)
- ii) bōbe bijabkhūṅ lakhuṅ? (Which book did you take?)
- iii) bōbe mūṣṣuṅṅ thuṅikhūṅ? (Which cow has died?)
- iv) nuṅṅ bōbe thajūṅṅkhūṅ labūṅṅṅ? (Which mango did you bring?)
- v) nuṅṅ bōbe zaiganiphrai phūṅṅṅṅ? (Which place do you come from?)

/bōbe/mabe/ question is used only in the front and the middle position of a sentence in the Bodo language.

3.1 Findings:

After discussing on the structure of Interrogative sentences of Bodo language, the following findings are found. These are-

- i) There are four types of structure in the Interrogative sentence of Bodo Language.
- ii) Mainly the question particles is found taking part in the Yes-No type question. These question particles are- /ba, se, na, mathūṅ, nama/. Some of these question particles used as questions by placing at the front, the middle and the final position of the sentence.
- iii) Some question words are found in Bodo language. Such as- /suṅṅ, ma, manuṅ, mabūṅṅṅ, mabla, besebaṅ, bōbe/mabe/ through which Interrogative sentence is formed by these words.
- iv) /suṅṅ, ma, besebaṅ/ question words are used in the front, the middle and the final position in the interrogative sentence.
- v) /manuṅ, /bōbe/mabe/, /mabla/, mabūṅṅṅ/ question words are used in the front and the middle position of a sentence.

4.1 Conclusion:

After discussion on the structure and construction of Interrogative sentence of Bodo language, it is found that question forming structure of the Bodo language has a unique characteristic. Enquiring and responding is a common function of day to day life. In Yes-No type question, question particles play vital role. In Intonation, pitch and stress plays main role to form a question sentence. In forming a tag question Intonation as well as question particles play crucial role to convey a question. Besides, /suṅṅ, ma, bōbe, besebaṅ, manuṅ, mabūṅṅṅ manuṅ, mabla/ question words are pure question words of the Bodo language that can convey a question independently. These are the structure of interrogative question in Bodo language. These are the four types of question structure of Bodo language through which everyone tries to communicate their feelings and ideas by enquiring and responding accordingly to the question.

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